

TRANSMITTAL #1

MEMORANDUM

May 7, 2008

TO: Youth Program Design Committee
Workforce Development Council

FROM: Roger B. Madsen, Director

SUBJECT: Recommendations for Youth Service Priorities

ACTION REQUESTED: Approve recommendations for Service Priorities

BACKGROUND:

As part of the WIA youth program design process, Idaho Department of Labor staff are asking the committee to make recommendations to the Workforce Development Council on *who is served* through the WIA youth program in the coming years by establishing priorities for various groups of at-risk youth.

During its meeting in February the committee determined that the design review process needed to address three questions: 1) Who should we serve? 2) What services should be offered? and 3) How should we obtain the services?

The committee reviewed the current WIA youth program eligibility requirements for services which require youth to be ages 14-21, low income and have one of the following barriers to employment:

- deficient in basic literacy skills
- school dropout
- homeless/foster child
- pregnant/parenting
- offender or
- requires additional assistance to complete an education program or to secure and hold employment.

In addition, the state can define one additional barrier group, "requires additional assistance" to employment.

The committee reviewed and discussed the United States Department of Labor's additional guidance that charges all federal youth-serving agencies with developing more effective interagency collaborations to better serve targeted youth populations, with priority given to serving the following categories of "neediest youth" including the following categories:

- children of incarcerated parents
- court-involved youth
- youth at risk of court involvement
- homeless and runaway youth
- Indian and Native American youth
- migrant youth
- out-of-school youth
- youth in or aging out of foster care and
- youth with disabilities.

The committee reviewed the current distribution and demographics of current WIA youth participants. Committee members were concerned about leveraging WIA resources in partnership with other youth service providers and asked staff to meeting with other providers to determine potential service gaps and identify where WIA services might be most effective.

Meeting With Other Youth Service Providers

Idaho Department of Labor WIA staff met with other youth service providers to identify gaps in services to youth and to discuss how WIA resources might best be utilized in leveraging other partner resources. Those in attendance included representatives from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Job Corps, Department of Health & Welfare – Foster Care program, Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Division of Professional-Technical Education, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Correction and Idaho Youth Ranch. Separate discussions were also held with Adult Basic Education and Health and Welfare TANF representatives.

During the meeting major gaps in services to youth with barriers to employment were identified as well as other needs as follows:

- Youth leaving foster care do not have sufficient services from any existing provider to attain self-sufficiency and avoid negative outcomes. There is funding for education and training services for those exiting foster care but it is seldom used. More can be done to coordinate with the foster care system to attain needed education services as well as "life support" for this group of youth.
- Youth involved in the juvenile justice system, particularly those leaving the state system, often lack access to education and training services. While substantial resources are devoted to community services, these tend to be used by counties for corrections services such as probation and parole rather than education and training. Court involved youth are currently a priority group and with limited other services, WIA funds can fill a service gap

- TANF provides soft-skills training for young single parents, such as life skills and job search coaching, but are not providing resources for technical-skills training that could increase the earning potential of these youth. The state should explore options to leverage TANF funds with WIA funds to build the capacity for self-sufficiency for this population.
- Out-of-school youth are less likely to have access to services than those in school. The lion's share of funding for youth is available through the public school system. WIA is one of the few programs with dollars available for at-risk young people with the exception of ABE/GED services and services through corrections and foster care. These are extremely minor investments compared to the public school budget. The discussants believed that out-of-school youth should be given priority for services. The group further suggested that where in-school youth are served, funds should be reserved for students in alternative settings or where Carl Perkins or local funds can be leveraged to deliver professional-technical education services to this group.
- Vocational Rehabilitation and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired requested that WIA youth programs continue a priority focus on this group to allow for coordinated service delivery, particularly as it relates to delivery of employer-based services.

One of the major requests by partners in the meeting was assistance from the Idaho Department of Labor in helping connect them with Idaho businesses through the One-Stop Career Center system. Rather than establish their own relationships with the private sector for job development sites for youth they requested the assistance of the department to coordinate and facilitate this activity for the entire One-Stop system. The partners also discussed the merits of mentoring for at-risk students who are often disconnected from other adults.

Staff recommendation:

Staff recommend the Workforce Development Council prioritize WIA youth services for the following:

- Youth who are involved with the juvenile justice system;
- Youth exiting foster care;
- Pregnant and parenting teens;
- Youth with disabilities;
- Out-of-school youth and
- In-school youth who are in alternative high schools or enrolled in programs leveraging Carl Perkins and/or local technical education funds.

WIA regulations allow states to define one program eligibility group, "requires additional assistance". A recommended modification of the state's definition for this eligibility group to incorporate this priority of service is attached.

Staff further recommend that the Workforce Development Council direct WIA youth services to focus on facilitating and enhancing business connections with various youth service providers and partners within the One-Stop Career Center system.

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Attachment

MODIFICATION TO ELIGIBILITY BARRIER GROUP “REQUIRES ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE”

- a. Youth exiting foster care;
- b. Youth with disabilities;
- c. Out-of-school youth and
- d. Is an individual who does not speak English as their primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English